

JEWS
and
YOU



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G. H. Guyot, C. M.

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by Arthur B. Klyber

Begin Here, Please

"Jews and You" is the second of a planned series of booklets on matters of interest and importance for God-fearing people. It is as significant for Christians as it is for Jews. Its pages answer some questions that frequently arise in the minds of both Groups. Among those questions are:

Was Jesus a Jew?

Was Judaism God's Religion?

Why don't the Jews believe in Jesus?

Did any Jews believe in Him? How many?

Why was Jesus crucified? Did the Jews crucify Him?

Was He condemned justly?

Are the Gospels antisemitic? Etc.

"To Be or Not to Be a Jew" is the title of the first pamphlet of the series. The original printing of 15,000 was circulated by private mailing without charge, and is now exhausted. It has just been reprinted in a revised edition: please see back cover for details.

"To Be or Not to Be a Jew" touches on the following questions:

Is there a God? Is He interested in the Jews?

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Were the Gospels written by good or bad Jews?

Do these Gospels tell the truth?

Does the Talmud say anything about Jesus? or about the Gospels?

Respectful caution to the Reader:

The discussions in these pages are closely knit. You should read the whole pamphlet: reading time is about one hour. If you read only parts of it you are likely to get a wrong impression of the whole book, and of its Author. These are 'touchy' matters for many people. Will you not read carefully?

Personal Note

In the Providence of God the Author was born of good Jewish parents. In his twentieth year, while serving in the Navy during World War One, he learned that the Christian Religion was the Fulfillment of the Jewish. By the grace of God he embraced what was already his through the Promises made by the Jewish Prophets. He will be happy to get in touch with any inquiring Jews, whether by mail or in person.

Jews and You

"After all, Father, Jesus was not a Catholic, you know," said Al Bloom, leaning over to flick the ashes from his cigarette. Al and his friend, Benjamin Merlach, both middle-aged Jews, were visiting with old Father McClaren in the quiet study of his rectory. Merlach showed some surprise at his fellow-Jew's bluntness with the Priest; but there was no danger of misunderstanding—a long and warm friendship forestalled that. The Pastor's eye twinkled as he pointed the stem of his pipe at Bloom and asked:

"What was He then, a Protestant?"

Was Jesus a Catholic? "Why no, of course not; he was a Jew; I thought you knew that."

"I did," smiled the Priest, "but I wanted to hear you say it. You see, Al, people use that word 'catholic' mostly as a label to distinguish us from Protestants and Jews, but there is more to it than that. My school-days plagued me with a course in Greek in which I discovered that the adjective 'catholic' came from two Greek words meaning 'all-embracing,' or 'universal'.

"Go to the very head of the class," chuckled Al Bloom; Merlach smiled, and the Priest laughed softly.

"We began to be called 'Catholic' Christians early in the second century of the Christian Era to distinguish us from some small groups which were attempting to corrupt the Teachings of Jesus. The word 'catholic,' which as I said means 'universal,' was chosen chiefly because it described us exactly as we were. We had already fanned out to the then known world, and it was our avowed intention to continue to carry

the Torch of the Gospel until the end of time. Moreover we were determined also to teach the **whole** Message of Jesus. We were 'Universalists' in the full sense of the word. If the language of that day had been English we should likely be known today as 'Universalists' instead of 'Catholics.'

"Now since Jesus was our Founder there must have been something 'all-embracing' or universal about Him; and—that 'universal' something, I make bold to say, was merely the expression of His Jewishness."

"Wha-a-t!" expostulated Bloom; while Merlach studied his cigar; "You don't mean to say that Jesus was 'catholic' because He was Jewish do you?"

"Exactly," smiled Father Mc-Claren calmly, enjoying Bloom's astonishment; "let me explain.

**Heart of
Judaism**

As you know, the Religion that Jesus and His Family practiced was revealed by God to the Jewish Nation, and seemed to be for it alone. Still, by its very make-up, that Religion was destined to crash its own boundaries and share its Divine Gifts with all the nations of the world. In other words, the **heart** of the Jewish Religion was 'all-embracing,' 'universal,' 'catholic.' The good Jewish People knew all this from their God-inspired Bible. In their Psalms they sang about it, and in their prayers they begged God to hasten the day. God's embrace must enfold **all** His children; and consequently any Religion He establishes must eventually be given to the whole world, even though for a period of time He is pleased to leave It in the care of a few."

"Any of us Jews could agree to that all right," said Merlach. It just struck me that we Orthodox Jews still pray for a world-kingdom in the days of the Messiah, when every nation will worship the God of Israel."

Psalm The Priest nodded and went on:
71 "Well, Jesus, as a devout Jew, not only cherished this world-outlook Himself, but commanded His Followers to go into the whole world and make known the Glad Tidings to everyone until the end of the world. In this way the Prophecy God made through King David was fulfilled:

"All nations shall serve Him, and in Him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed." Today, due to the obedience of the Disciples of Jesus—all of them good Jews—nearly every nation actually does worship God. I should say that Jesus was not merely a Catholic but that He was the Catholic because He was the Jew."

Al Bloom shrugged his shoulders slightly and looked at the carpet; Merlach's brow was knit in perplexity as he asked:

"Father McClaren, I wouldn't for the world want to seem insulting, but do you blame me for asking how a Jew who was cast out by his own People could have been the Jew?"

Fair "Don't blame you at all, Ben;
Enough the question is a fair one" answered the Priest while pressing some tobacco into his pipe. "Jewish history and Christian history agree that Jesus was accused of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God. The only question is,—did the Authorities of His Nation condemn Him justly or unjustly? "In this Book," he said, tapping a Bible that lay on his desk, "there are several eyewitness accounts of what happened during the short time Jesus spent among the Jewish People as a preaching Rabbi. Nearly all of these histories were written by devout Jews whom today you would call 'frumm' or pious. Now . . .

“Pardon please, Father,” interrupted Ben, “but you surely know how little those Gospels mean to Jews. They were written to favor some of the very teachings of Jesus which we have condemned; how then can we accept them as trustworthy histories?”

“Ben, I feel keenly the sensitiveness of the Jewish People about the Gospels. They believe that the Gospels have ruined their good name before the world and have brought persecution upon them; and so, they condemn them as anti-semitic. I wish I had time to show you how much honor these Books give to your People, and how truthful They are. For the time being, however, this may supply,” he said, handing each of them a pamphlet entitled “To Be or Not to Be a Jew.” “In it you will find some enlightening facts about the Gospel Histories.”

**Gospels
Not
Anti-
Semitic**

“But in passing I ought to say that the historical truthfulness of both Christian and Jewish Bibles is proved by the **same** tests. Anyone therefore, who throws out the Gospels as fables, must in all honesty do the same with the Jewish Bible. Did you know that there was a long period of years, in which the only Bible the Christians had was the Jewish Bible? Why—I would defend the truthfulness of the ‘Old’ Testament as firmly as I would the ‘New’.”

A Big Order

"Well Father, what were you going to say about those Gospels?" asked Al Bloom.

Jesus Was "I was going to show you
a from Them that Jesus was a
Good Jew good Jew; and—that the Jewish People among whom He lived were good Jews."

"Pretty big order, isn't it Father," smiled Al; but since the writers of those Gospels were Jews—and even good ones as you state—they couldn't really have hated their own People. Maybe we should listen to what they have to say; what do you think Ben?"

"O.K. If Father McClaren can make those books prove that the Jews of that day were not the rascals people think they were, more power to him."

"Thanks," began the priest with a smile, "first I'll try to show you that Jesus was a devout Jew, loyal to His Nation; and that as such, He could not have been guilty of any violation of the Law of Moses."

He paged quickly to a place in the Gospel, looked up at the two men and said: "Passing by the earlier years of His life, let's see Him as He makes what was probably His first public appearance. John the Baptizer, a Jew of undisputed holiness, at that time drew all Jerusalem to the Jordan River where he was preaching repentance and baptism. To this baptism came not only crowds of ordinary Jews but even Pharisees and Sadducees—the Authorities of the Nation. Jesus also came. This baptism was not the same as the Christian baptism which came later. When John objected to baptising Jesus whom he called "The Lamb of God," Jesus answered: "Permit it now for so it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."

“With His Family He attended synagogue regularly; and on high Holy Days such as Passover and Pentecost He was to be seen in the Temple. No Jew was more respectful toward the Law of Moses than Jesus. In one of His many word-battles with Pharisees and Sadducees He forestalled any accusation that He might not be a loyal Jew. “Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill. For, until heaven (the skies) and earth pass away, not one iota or dot shall pass away from the Law until all be fulfilled.”

**Respects
Law of
Moses**

“The Pharisees were His bitter enemies, yet not even this could make Him disobey them as the Authorities of the Religion of God. To his Jewish audiences he taught: “The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Do and observe therefore all that they may tell you...” If anyone wanted to destroy Christianity he would only need to prove that Jesus even once disobeyed the Law of Moses.”

**And
Teaches
Obedience**

Who Did It?

Al Bloom turned to Merlach and said: "If all this be true it does seem strange that such a loyal Jew could have been cast off as a malefactor; what do you think?"

**Why Was Jesus
Condemned?** "I don't know," mused Ben in a cloud of smoke; "it's hard for me to see it

that way. I was raised by Orthodox Jewish parents who have clung faithfully to the teachings and traditions of the ancient Synagogue. Consequently I am not prepared to admit that the Authorities of our Religion made any serious mistake in such an important matter. Father, if it is so clear that Jesus was a devout Jew, how explain his being condemned as a bad one? Didn't the Judges understand their own Religion? And what about the whole Jewish People—were they without common-sense and virtue in agreeing to his punishment?"

"Ben, I'm glad to see you're not afraid to 'take the bull by the horns,' as they say. The Great Sanhedrin, or High Court of the Jews, was as capable a body of Judges as any; and the Talmud proves this to any unbiased reader. Obviously too, they knew their Religion—knew what blasphemy was, and what a true miracle was. As for the Jewish People themselves, they were wholesome and devoted to God. Anyone who denies this must be either badly informed or swayed by prejudice. What we say is this: the political and spiritual corruption of **some** of the Leaders gravely interfered with their sense of justice, before the arrest of Jesus, and after it.

"This is found in Jewish history as well as Christian. If I remember correctly, doesn't the Talmud agree with the Gospels in its description of the utter spiritual decay of the Sadducees, Ben?"

**Jewish History
Says Sadducees
Were Bad**

"Ye-e-s, it does," answered Merlach honestly; "I recall one sentence in particular: 'Learn or inquire nothing of the Sadducees lest thou be drawn into hell.'"

Father McClaren continued: "And since the Talmud was written and compiled almost exclusively by **Pharisees**, we can understand why its 2000 and more Writers would not chastise the faults of their own Group. Yet in spite of this, we do find a few scalding hot passages about some types of Pharisees, especially about hypocrites."

"In bringing forward facts like these it is easy to get rated as an anti-semite. So, by way of caution I want to emphasize that we never labelled **all** Pharisees and Sadducees and **all** Jews as wicked. The same histories that tell of the bad ones tell also of the good ones. I hope I shall never sink into that painful and common error of condemning **all** Jews in the world, on account of the mistakes or sins of a few."

**Anti-
Semite
Sticker**

"You see, Ben," said Al Bloom enthusiastically, "I told you Father was a real friend of our People. I wish we had more like him; maybe then we Jews and Christians could get along better—like honest-to-goodness children of God."

"Thanks for the compliment Al; I think I'm trying to live in accordance with the gentle advice of Jesus that we should love one another."

Jesus Hated Hate

"No one in history condemned hatred in clearer or more forceful words than He. No one ever counselled love of enemies as He did. And what is more telling—no one ever **practiced** love of enemies as He did. When some of His Jewish Disciples asked Him to call fire from the sky to consume the Samaritans—religious enemies of the Jews—Jesus' eyes flashed with just anger as he replied: "You know not of what spirit you are; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." In other words;—'Yours is the spirit of revenge and persecution: it is not God's Spirit; put it aside forever.'

Unchristian Christians "You know Father, it's nice to hear you say those things," said Ben, gratefully. "There's wild confusion in the minds of

us Jews when we see the Followers of Jesus hating and hounding their real or supposed enemies from one country to another, and herding them into lethal gas-chambers, and into gravel-pit graves. We are far from perfect we admit. We have ways and manners that non-Jews don't like, and perhaps we could pay more attention to God and religion. I'm ashamed to say I only go to Synagogue on Rosh Hashonah, Yom Kippur and Passover. But Father, haven't all nationalities got some weaknesses, some unlikable ways that make them step on other people's toes once in awhile?"

Father McClaren's face wore almost a look of contrition. He understood what Ben Merlach was trying to say, and he agreed. "Sometimes," he thought, "Christians do act like pagans or barbarians; and—sometimes also, Jews act more Christian than Christians." He snapped out of his reverie and asked:

Stumbling Blocks

“What were you saying, Ben?”

Merlach smiled: “Well I hadn’t said anything Father, but I did have a difficulty. While admitting the spiritual decay of some of the Sadducees, I don’t see how God could have permitted the Pharisees to become corrupt, since they were the real religious Leaders of the People.”

“Ben, what would you say if I were to show you that the Gospels are not nearly so rough on Jewish Leaders as is the Jewish Bible itself?”

Merlach only arched his eyebrows momentarily. The Priest went on: “Corruption and sin in high places is as old as the human race itself, so we needn’t be surprised at anything a human being does: and this holds for Prophets, Kings, High-Priests, Apostles and Popes. Aren’t we a fallen race struggling to rise? Scandals have occurred in the Synagogue, in the Catholic Church and in Protestant Groups, which turn our faces red with shame. Nevertheless we have to keep a clear head about it all. As no one would say that an apple is a worm just because he finds a worm in it, neither should he say that a Religion is bad merely because he finds some wicked members in it. The sins of individual Jews and Christians are their own—not the Synagogue’s or the Church’s. True Religion is like good food: those who eat It will prosper, and those who refuse to eat It will get sick and die.”

**Scandals
in
High Places**

**Are
Apples
Worms?**

“Seems to make sense, Father,” observed Merlach; “could you refresh my memory on some of those Bible scandals you spoke of?”

“Bible Scandals”

“Certainly Ben, though in fairness I should first reveal a few specimens of Christian scandals, shouldn’t I?”

“Maybe,” he answered with a smile; “but that might delay us too long; and besides I have read of them in history and can see them around me today.”

“All right then,” said Father McClaren; “I’ll tell you of three notable scandals just to drive home the truth that **personal sinfulness in a Religious Leader** is nothing new, and **leaves his Religion unharmed**. There was Eli the High-Priest, a good man himself, but seemingly weak in correcting his Sons, Ophni and Phineas. It is written in the Book of Samuel that these two Priests kept robbing the meat-offerings which pious Israelites brought to the Altar of God for sacrifice. They also surrendered themselves to innumerable sins of lust with the women who waited at the door of the Tabernacle.

Bad Priests	These men were Leaders of
Bad Prophets	the People, and should have
Bad Kings	edified them; but instead

they caused many Jews to quit offering sacrifices to God. The Religion was good, the Priests were bad.

“Next there is David, King and Prophet, who sinfully took to himself Bethsabee the wife of Urias, and then murdered Urias by placing him in battle where the fighting was fiercest.

“Finally, Solomon, David’s Son, not only fell into many sins with his pagan wives and concubines but even ‘turned away his mind from the Lord God who had appeared to him twice.’ Actually he fell into idolatry, by worshipping the pagan gods Astarte and Moloch: he had given up the Religion of his Fathers! The Religion was good, the Kings were bad.

**All
Were
Punished**

"There is no respect of persons with God, as you know. All these Leaders were punished according to the grievousness of their crimes: Ophni and Phineas were killed in battle on the same day; the child born to King David by Bethsabee was taken by God in death; and Solomon's Kingdom was divided into two parts. 'Because he hath forsaken Me, . . . I will take away the Kingdom out of his Son's hand . . .'

"So you see, Ben — what happened in those days could happen again,—and it did. As with Solomon, the Kingdom was divided,—so in the case of the Pharisees and Sadducees the Kingdom was taken away altogether. Now God does not punish in this manner without proportionate reasons. What were those reasons? It was not any wholesale wickedness on the part of the Jewish People, for they were good, and devoted to God. It was not the **Religion** they had, for that had come from God. What was wrong? The only answer is found in the total unworthiness, and sinfulness of the Leaders. Jesus had foretold it—"The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from YOU . . ." from you Leaders."

"Father," said Al Bloom, "you've touched some sore spots but I think Ben and I understand that you had to do so in order to make yourself clear: we appreciate it. It's getting late," he said fingering his watch, "maybe we can get together soon again about these interesting matters."

The two men thanked the Priest for his time and kindness, shook his hand heartily and left.

Meat on Friday

Several days later Father McClaren heard the cheery voice of Al Bloom over the 'phone inviting him to lunch.

Meat on Friday "Sorry Al, but work has me pinned to my Study: can't you have lunch with me? Bring Merlach with you. But I warn you it's Friday, and the only kind of steak I can offer you is halibut."

"It's O.K., Father," answered Al with a little laugh; "we Jews eat fish on Friday too—and meat," he added mischievously.

Lunch was over and the three men were lounging comfortably, discussing lightly some current issues. At length Ben Merlach brought the conversation around to the topic of a few days back.

"Al and I talked over the thoughts you offered in our previous chat, and agreed that Religious Leaders were as much subject to sin as others. But, we're still cloudy about the share the Jewish Populace had in the condemnation of Jesus. Do you think the whole Nation could have been mistaken in its judgment about one man?"

Jews Believed "That, Ben, is cleared up by a simple fact of history: it was **not** the **whole** Nation that cast Him off but only a decided minority. As only a minority of the people of the United States know the real causes of the present war,

only a minority of the Jews knew all about the attack on Jesus of Nazareth.

Of course they could do little; most of them took the word of their Leaders, and consequently had to suffer punishment with them. It is a too little known and appreciated fact that thousands of Jews somehow

believed in Him both before and after His death.

"Are you saying that thousands believed Jesus was the Messiah?" asked Al Bloom in wonder.

"I am; and in addition to the Leaders Jews who believed in Him after Believed His resurrection from the dead, —an undefined number, including Priests and Pharisees, regarded Him with great respect. John, an eye-witness reporter of the things he relates, says that

'Many, even among the Authorities believed in Him, but on account of the Pharisees they did not acknowledge it for fear of being expelled from the Synagogue.'

"Many other Jews also, were prevented from giving complete belief both because of fear of being excommunicated, and because of doubts put into their minds by the Pharisees' stubborn campaign of confusion. Privately I believe that multitudes of Jews honored Jesus as a Prophet as long as they lived.

"Let us settle this:—the Jewish People of Jerusalem loved Jesus until they were bewildered, threatened, and led astray by their wilfully blinded Leaders: propaganda worked then as it does now; with the masses of people it is an irresistible weapon for evil. Here is a comment on this point by one of our sainted and most learned Teachers, Thomas of Aquin." Father McClaren reached for a book opened it and read:

"...the (Jewish) People, not understanding the mysteries of the Scripture did not know clearly

that Jesus was either the Messiah or the Son of God. Although some of them believed in Him, the multitude did not. And if at any time they suspected that He was the Messiah because of the great number of His miracles and the effectiveness of His Doctrine, they were afterwards **deceived by their Princes** into refusing to believe He was the Messiah or the Son of God. That is why Peter when addressing them could say: "I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your Leaders. . . ."

"It is to be pointed out that not even the Leaders knew of the mystery of His Divinity, although they did know that He was the Messiah promised in the Law, just as did the devils, since they saw in Him all the Signs which the Prophets declared would be seen. But the ignorance of these Leaders was altogether inexcusable. When they saw in Jesus the Signs of the Messiah they asked: 'If thou art the Messiah tell us . . . ' and Jesus answered: "If I should tell you you would not believe Me'."

Touch Him Not The old Priest put the Book down and said: "It was only seldom that Jesus had to wrangle with the ordinary Jews: most of His mental wrestlings were with the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is almost certain that if these Leaders had been above board and docile, the Jewish People would have acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah with one voice. The devotion of the People for Jesus was so marked that for a long time the Authorities dared not lay a hand on Him for fear of a revolt."

“The Jews”

“Honest, Father, I didn’t know such kind things could be drawn out of the Gospels about our People; it’s enlightening and encouraging,” said Al Bloom warmly. Ben Merlach nodded affirmatively several times. “When such things are better known,” said the kind old Priest, **Careless** “Jews and Christians will understand each other better. How **Gospel-Readers** many Christians, and Jews too, know that Jesus aimed most of His severe condemnations directly at the **Leaders**, and not at the plain Jews in His audiences? A careless reader might also easily get the impression that every time the Gospel-Writers speak of “the Jews” they mean **every** Jew; but this is far from true. Read the whole Gospel according to St. John with this in mind and you will get some surprises, I think. For instance, on one occasion Jesus said to His audience: ‘**You** are from below, I am from above; **you** are of this world, I am not . . . **you** shall die in your sins’ . . . He was here talking to the spiritually blinded Pharisees and Sadducees. Once when the **Jewish** Disciples said to Jesus: “Rabbi, . . . the **Jews** were just now attempting to stone Thee . . .” they certainly could not have meant the **whole** Jewish People, else they would have had to include themselves.

“Common-sense tells us that if Jesus had belabored the ‘Jew in the street’ in the way He did the Leaders, He would have had nobody listening to Him before long. To the ordinary Jews, despised by their Leaders, he said: ‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily-laden (by the Pharisees) . . . **MY** yoke is easy, and **My** burden light.’

This Man Jesus

"Ah, those are the things to tell your good people, Father," suggested Ben Merlach; "how much it would help!"

"I do," replied Father McClaren; "and I intend to keep on doing so. The particular Leaders who hated Jesus, had made up their minds to wreck His good Name by any means at all. Whenever crowds of intelligent Jews saw in Jesus a Miracle-Worker and a Prophet of God, the Leaders were on hand to point out sneeringly that He was only a magician and a robber of God's glory. Their's was an unrelenting barrage of confusion: their sneerings were usually along the same line. This man is a blasphemer, this man is a devil... is seducing the people... is working miracles on the Sabbath... eats with sinners... forgives sins.

"Certainly many of the Jews who had to listen to these hecklers day after day could not stand their barrage of abuse for long without beginning to have doubts about 'this man'."

Merlach flicked some ashes from his cigar; Bloom lit a cigarette. Both men had been leaning forward somewhat; it was hard to read their thoughts. The Priest took a few pulls at his pipe; and when he saw that the men had no comment to make, he continued:

**Expelled
From
Synagogue**

"When the Leaders saw that their ridicule of Jesus was not lessening His popularity too much they published an excommunication against anyone who should acknowledge Him as the Messiah. Ben—you as an Orthodox Jew should be acquainted with the severe spiritual and

social penalties of such an excommunication."

"Well somewhat; the Jewish excommunication hasn't much power anymore except perhaps in some isolated, closely guarded Orthodox communities."

"Anyhow," the priest went on, "we can understand that this threat must have made many Jews keep their distance from Jesus. This was doubly true after His crucifixion, when the excommunication brought prison and death to the Followers of Jesus."

"Yes, we can understand that, Father," said Al Bloom; but wouldn't you think that the Pharisees were within their rights in threatening an excommunication and in deciding what was a miracle, and what was not?"

"You may bet they were; the Church acted likewise in matters of heresy and miracles. But what we have to underline is that

Of God, or
of Devil

the Pharisees and Sadducees could not agree among themselves about the Teachings and miracles of Jesus!

Some of them said He was of God, and others said He was of the devil. Had they been of one mind about these things your objection would have great weight. As I observed some minutes ago, 'Many even among the **Authorities** believed in Him...' If we join this fact with the unquestionable loyalty of Jesus to the Law of Moses, and with His deep respect for the Authorities who '...sit in the chair of Moses,' we will understand the affair more clearly."

Al Bloom said: "Perhaps we can accept these explanations without compromising our Jewish Belief. Not a few **modern Rabbis** have honored Jesus as a great Jew, and

have begun to take him as one of our own . . . without of course calling him the Messiah. After all, it is a kind of mystery how billions of gentiles could be worshipping as their Saviour a Jew who was excommunicated for blasphemy: am I right Ben?"

"Maybe we ought to look the bull in the face," answered Ben with a little smile. "Since the 400,000,000 Christians of today regard Jesus as a Perfect Jew, I don't see why we can't do the same: it does an honor to our People. However," he added cautiously, "that does not necessarily make him the Messiah. We cannot admit that God would lower Himself to appear as a man on earth; our Torah warns us against giving divine worship to anything created."

"Well, that is another matter," said Father McClaren, "although there seems to be a knotty problem involved here."

If one admits that Jesus was a perfect Jew, he must also admit that Jesus would not lie. And since He would not lie, then what He said about Himself must have been true. He maintained He was the Messiah and the Son of God; therefore He is.

"Nevertheless," continued the Priest immediately, "we agree that He was a good Jew—and that admits much; for, obviously a good Jew could not have been shaking hands with the devil while working miracles, could he?"

Miracles
of
Jesus

"Guess not," answered Ben. "Now Jesus stressed this very point when the Leaders sneered at His miracles before the people. If I were a sinner and were teaching the people to break the Commandments and to disobey you Pharisees, He said, you might have some ground for

calling me a mere magician or a devil. But 'Which of you can convict Me of sin?' Moreover, do you think the devil would help Me to smash his kingdom? 'How can Satan expel Satan?' 'A Kingdom divided against itself cannot endure... If Satan has rebelled against himself... he has reached his end.' My miracles therefore are from God. 'If you do not believe Me, (at least) believe the Works that I do'."

Who Started It?

"Um, hmm," was Merlach's non-committal comment as he exhaled a cloud of smoke. Al Bloom then said: "I was wondering, Father Joe, just what it was in the first place that determined the Leaders to get Jesus out of the way; what had He done to Them?"

"As we see it," said the Priest "He had done nothing but teach unadulterated Jewish Religion, as the Prophets had done before Him. In order to save the Jewish People from the evil influence of these men he had to make public their offenses against God and against their very own Nation.

"The lines of battle were drawn when Jesus entered public life as a preaching Rabbi. When He saw some Pharisees in His audience He warned the Jews against them: 'Do not have a trumpet blown before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets . . .

Crossed Swords "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! for you shut the Kingdom of heaven in men's faces . . . Woe to you blind guides who say, 'If one swears by the Temple it is nothing; but if one swears by the gold of the Temple one is bound (to his oath). Blind fools . . . which is greater—the gold or the Temple which has sanctified the gold? . . . Woe . . . Woe . . . Woe . . . Woe . . . you serpents! how are you to escape the damnation of Gehenna?'"

"Well, He couldn't have gained any favor with the Leaders by such denunciations," said Al with a little smile.

Man-made Traditions "You bet not, but He had to protect His own beloved People against these sinful men. When they (Pharisees) asked him, 'Why do thy disciples transgress the

tradition of our forefathers, for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread . . . why don't they fast as we do . . . why do they pluck corn to eat on the Sabbath? etc., etc.' " Jesus answered:

'Why do **you** transgress the commandment of **God** for the sake of **your** traditions?'

"As the Pharisees kept campaigning to belittle His good Works and His Preaching and His miracles, He in turn for the sake of the people had to uncover their hypocrisy and their sins."

The Priest stopped to re-light his pipe and then continued: "These **Greedy Leaders** seemed interested chiefly in gaining money, and in bolstering their political and spiritual overlordship. Being greedy, they sneered when Jesus warned: 'You cannot serve God and Mammon' (money, possessions, glory). Now here, the Prophet of Nazareth was touching them on a very tender point—namely their income. It is well-known that the Sadducees drew a handsome revenue from the Temple-markets—from the money-changers and cattle-sellers. Jesus gained no love from these Sadducees when He drove the money-changers and cattle-dealers from the Temple area. If before this the Sadducees had opposed Him only lukewarmly because He had been lashing at their enemies the Pharisees,—now they joined hands heartily with the Pharisees, and together they plotted His Death.

"Startling as it may strike you, these unprincipled men of the Jewish Nation actually despised the Jewish Citizenry. For instance, they singled out for ridicule the merciful attitude of Jesus toward sinners and publicans (tax-gatherers); and—about the Jewish man in

**Anti-Semitic
Jews**

the street they hissed: 'This rabble, ignorant of the Law, are a cursed lot.' Talk about your anti-semites — these Pharisees may not have been such in the modern sense of the word, but they surely lost no love on their poorer, less fortunate fellow-Jews. They held themselves aloof almost as a different caste of Jew from the ordinary man, very much as modern snobs might feel soiled in the company of a man in overalls. Their snub-nose attitude toward the uneducated Jew, whom they should have educated, is further revealed in their treatment of the man to whom Jesus had given back his sight: "Thou wast totally born in sins," they said to him fiercely, "and dost thou presume to teach us!"

White Heat "When finally Jesus began to foretell that they were going to lose their places of Authority altogether, their hatred reached a white heat. They did not need much cleverness to see themselves as the villains in a number of the Parables of Jesus: in the parable of the Cursed Figtree, in that of the Wicked Vine-dressers, and others. To their faces He told them: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from **you** . . . Your house shall be left to **you** desolate" . . . "There will not be left a stone upon a stone . . ."

"Doesn't all this help to explain why the Leaders dogged his footsteps; why they tried to catch Him in some damaging statement; and why finally, they were quick to count out thirty pieces of silver into the hand of Judas to betray Jesus? But what did they gain? only misery for themselves and their Nation. The Holy Altar, the Priesthood, the Temple, the Holy City were ripped from their hands, and the Jewish People were exiled to the four directions of the compass. Too evident was the displeasure of God with those wicked Leaders.

Sinfully blind themselves, they blindfolded their innocent countrymen and led them into darkness.

"O may God be good to the millions of worthy Jews of yesterday and now, who have had to pay in exile, tears, and blood, for the gross sins of those heartless Leaders of long ago!" concluded Father McClaren fervently. "May He spare them today from further persecution; may He give them peace in the lands of their exile; and may He at last bring them home to everlasting happiness with Him in heaven."

**Mercy
Above
Justice**

"Amen," said Al and Ben lowering their heads.

Good Friday's Rabbi

It was Good Friday, 1944, and the Cathedral was filled with worshippers; devout Catholics, 'Good-Friday Catholics,' many Protestants, and some Jews. All were listening attentively as the Speaker developed his theme:

"And Pontius Pilate cried out to the Jews: 'It is your custom that I release to you one prisoner on this great Holy Day of yours; I will therefore release Jesus.'

At once there was an uneven uproar from many parts of the crowd: 'No not this man but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a thief and a murderer. 'But what has Jesus done? I find Him innocent of any crime; I will scourge him therefore and let him go.' 'No!', yelled the Jews; 'if you release this man you are no friend of Caesar; crucify him, crucify him.' And so, 'at nine o'clock that morning the innocent Lamb of God was crucified by the tongues of the Jews; and at twelve o'clock by the hands of the Roman executioners'."

About five o'clock that afternoon, Father McClaren's housekeeper admitted two middle-aged gentlemen, and invited them to go right up to the Pastor's Study.

Meet the Rabbi "Why Al!" exclaimed the Priest heartily while shaking his friend's hand; what on earth brings you here today?" He looked at the stranger. "Uh—Father Joe I want you to meet Rabbi Leidner of Temple Israel. Rabbi, this is Father McClaren about whom I told you so many nice things." The two Clergymen greeted each other and shook hands.

"Sit down and get comfortable, Rabbi; as for Al, he does so without being asked. Have a cigar; but of all days that I should be honored by a visit from a Rabbi!"

The Old Troublemaker

"Guess it does seem strange at that," said Al; "but you see, when I decided to accept your invitation to go to the Three Hours' Service I persuaded Rabbi to come along, at least for culture's sake. He belongs to the Conservatives—you know,—the Group that keeps nearly everything the Orthodox have except those Pharisee Traditions we talked about a few days ago." The Rabbi and the Priest smiled.

"Yes, I'm acquainted with the Teachings of Conservative Jews; and I have thought that they come nearest to the type of Jew that Jesus wanted his contemporaries to be."

"To get to the point, Father," said Al, "Rabbi has something to ask you. I told him you were one man to whom any Jew could talk freely without fear of being misunderstood."

"I appreciate the recommendation, Al. Was it something about this afternoon's Services Rabbi?" asked Father McClaren affably.

"Frankly, it was," answered the Rabbi in a rich baritone; "the old difficulty about the Crucifixion Story. Today as you know, the Jewish people are being hounded, and killed off like flies; and—pardon my bluntness—you'll understand—this afternoon's sermon seemed to help such persecution along, I thought. Now Father McClaren, I am not going to make that unprovable claim of modern Jews, that the Romans were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus: for our authentic Jewish history tells us differently."

"You are a friend of the Jews, Al tells me, and I believe it. He says you occasion-

ally preach to your Parishioners about being kind to us. Father, let me ask you—why do priests and ministers keep on advertising that the Jews killed Jesus? What do they gain from such preaching except a serious strain on the good feeling that should exist between Christians and Jews?

**Did the
Jews Kill
Jesus?** “Isn’t the Church heaping coal on the fires of hate? In the interest of brotherly love could anything be done to omit the Crucifixion Story from sermons and catechisms?”

Father McClaren lowered his head and was silent for several seconds. He had read lately in Jewish periodicals almost the identical words the Rabbi had just used. He knew that many Jews were becoming daily more sensitive to the Gospel Story because of the persecutions of their People in many parts of the world.

“Rabbi,” he said finally, “first in all fairness to the Preacher of this afternoon I ought to say that he climaxed his sermon by blaming the sins of all men for the Crucifixion: that, as perhaps you know, is a traditional Catholic approach.”

“Oh, I heard and noted those concluding words all right, Father, but it struck me that his stress on the part the Jews played was out of proportion to the lesson he wanted to teach. Besides, I felt that his sermon must have tickled the ears of those in his audience who already despised us.”

“Your objection is not without foundation, Rabbi. I have watched my own sermons on that point and have urged other priests to watch theirs. With most of those who stress the Jewish part too much, it is rather a lack of forethought than real malice or prejudice.

“Nevertheless I must regretfully admit that occasionally we do find a priest or a

minister bitterly prejudiced against your People. Please don't judge all by a few."

"I try not to," said Rabbi Leidner earnestly.

"As for omitting the Crucifixion Story from our sermons and catechisms—" the priest went on, "I'm positive you do not realize the implications of such a move, else you would not have suggested it. Our view clears up by a brief comparison between the Crucifixion and the Deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. Nearly everything you and your People have dates from your liberation from the Pharaoh of Egypt by the miracle of the Passover, and of the Red Sea. Everything Christians have, dates from and flows from the Crucifixion. As you would justly refuse to erase the Passover Story from your Books, we too cannot remove the Crucifixion Story from ours.

**Rub Out
the Story
of the
Crucifixion?**

"However, Rabbi, it is my opinion that the solution will not be found in removing the Story but only in explaining it properly. As I have told Al, and Ben Merlach and other Jewish friends of mine, the Story of the Crucifixion could not possibly be anti-semitic since it was written by Jews who loved their fellow-Jews intensely, and even lived with them and prayed with them almost up to destruction of the Holy City. The Story is certainly anti-Jewish, in the sense that it is against a small group of unworthy Jewish Leaders."

"Um, hmm," the Rabbi mumbled thoughtfully, "I see your viewpoint, Father. How then would you explain the Crucifixion incident properly?"

The Priest Explains

"Well, I have advocated that in our sermons and in our parochial schools, whenever we mention the Jews' part in the Crucifixion, we should take care to explain as time permits:

1. That multitudes of Jews of today are entirely ignorant of the history of the Crucifixion, and have no real guilt in it.

2. That even many of the Jews of the time of Jesus had no actual guilt in the crime.

3. That our brotherly love would have to be given to the Jews even if all of them, past and present, had maliciously brought Jesus to the Cross."

Al Bloom's face broadened in a smile; and the Rabbi beamed his satisfaction. Here, he thought, was a Christian who came close to the kindliness and mercy of the Jesus pictured in the Gospels.

"O might the blessings of our Common Father, God, descend generously upon his head, and may the like of him be multiplied!" he thought prayerfully.

"Thank you Father McClaren, for your charitable understanding of a delicate problem. Your view is constructive and may God help you to spread it through the Church. I must have you come over to speak to my Congregation sometime.

"By the way, I had always thought the Jewish People were of one mind about the execution of Jesus, but you said just now that many of the Jews of Jesus' time had no guilt in his execution: if that's true, it would help much to make it known. How do you get at it?"

“It’ll be a pleasure to tell you, Rabbi. The ordinary man, acquainted with only the broad lines of the Crucifixion incident, is liable to make the grievously wrong judgment that God doesn’t have a care for the Jews. Upon this conclusion he might decide that he can treat the Jews harshly. The average Jew on his part, is in danger of thinking that the Church displays the Crucifix and preaches about the Crucifixion purposely to stir up hatred of the Jews. ‘Take down that symbol of hate,’ said a well-intentioned Jew to me once.

Light of Love or Blaze of Hate

“But the view of all instructed and good Christians is that the Crucifixion is the most astonishing victory over hate which this hating world has ever seen. Stop one of our Catholics entering a Church and ask him: ‘What does that Crucifix hanging there tell you?’ He will answer something like this: ‘It tells me that Jesus laid down His life for me and all men, that the gates of heaven might open for us.’ Even a cross-country poll of Catholics and of good Protestants too, would reveal only that attitude — mercy and love. Only an unworthy Christian would think of answering: ‘That’s the Lord whom the dirty Jews crucified.’

“Yet, Rabbi, hate-propaganda does its work on the good as well as the evil; and so it happens that some Christians, too, have strange notions and feelings about the Jews. A close study of the Trial of Jesus, I think, will indeed be helpful for Christian and Jew alike.”

Crucifixion and Arithmetic

"Suppose we view the Trial through simple arithmetic. Probably you can tell me how many Jews were in Jerusalem during any given Passover."

Rabbi Leidner knitted his brow for a moment and answered: "Our Talmud states that twice as many Jews as were freed from Egypt, were in the Holy City on the Passover."

"Thanks Rabbi; and we three have read Moses' statement that 600,000 Jews left Egypt on that occasion. We double that, and conclude there must have been about 1,200,000 Jews in Jerusalem on Pesach. Correct?"

"Almost," replied the Rabbi smiling; "it was the ordinary procedure for Jews to count only **men** when giving populations. May I have that Bible a moment Father?" The Priest reached to a shelf and handed it to him. Paging to the Book of Exodus, the Rabbi said:

2,000,000 Jews in Jerusalem on Good Friday "Here is what Moses says: '...and the Children of Israel set forward...about 600,000 **men** on foot besides children...'; he means male children under twenty. Some authorities do not hesitate to raise the number of Jews in the Departure from Egypt, to 3,000,000; but that seems too large."

"A nice detail indeed! it strengthens what I want to demonstrate. Suppose we say there were 2,000,000 Jews at Jerusalem during the Passover at the time of the Trial."

"I don't think any Jewish authorities would object to that," said Rabbi Leidner agreeably.

? ?

"Now the question is," continued the Priest, "how many of this two million had an intelligent understanding of what was going on? It is my conviction that many of them had only a slight responsibility for the death sentence of Jesus. It is my further conviction that most of those who had full responsibility for the crucifixion were Pharisees and Sadducees. By the way, Rabbi, do you happen to know how many there were in each Party?"

"I understand that the Pharisee Party, by far the more powerful with the people, had about 6000 members. The Sadducees, much smaller, drew their membership from among the Priests of the Temple; but not all Priests belonged to the Party. How many Sadducees there were I have not been able to find out."

"Good; let's see what our multiplication and division table brings out. How many Jews could have jammed into the space before the Governor's Judgment Seat? Some authorities think the Trial was held at the Fortress Antonia: if it was, then the number of Jews there amounted to as many as could be crowded into a square-block. Others say the Trial was conducted at Herod's Palace: here I need your help again Rabbi. Would you know how big the space was before the Judgment Seat at Herod's Palace?"

How Big, the
Judgment
Court?

"Not exactly; but one Jewish historian informs us that you could have gotten a small army into it."

"Rather indefinite, isn't it," said the priest with a smile, "but I don't think anyone will take issue with me if I say a small army is 10,000—would you, Rabbi?"

"Not at all, Father; even that figure may be too large."

No Public-Address System “Using the 10,000 as a working figure,” the priest went on, we find that only one Jew out of every 200 was present at the trial. Moreover it is a stubborn question how many even of this 10,000 could have gotten within **hearing distance**: you know, public-address systems were then still 1900 years away.”

“Very interesting, Father McClaren; I hadn’t considered the Trial from such angles,” the Rabbi said.

Believers The Priest nodded, and continued: “Now let’s place ourselves on the Judge’s Platform
Neutrals and size up the crowd. That
Deniers crowd should divide easily into three groups — **Believers**, **Neutrals**, and **Deniers** of Jesus: St. John, eye-witness reporter, states there were “many” **Believers**. The **Believers**, among whom were some Pharisees and Sadducees, were horrified, and distracted with grief. They could not understand how a Jew who had healed the sick, straightened the feet of the lame, opened the eyes of the blind, and had caused the dead to walk again, could possibly be guilty of blaspheming the God by whose power He worked these miracles. Of course this Group had nothing to do with the death of Jesus.

“What about the **Neutrals**, or **Doubters**? Very many of them must have been foreign Jews—visitors in Jerusalem for the Pass-over Feast. They knew next to nothing about the real Jesus, but likely had already been strongly influenced against him by the Leaders. As we saw just a while ago, the rest of the **Neutrals** did not know clearly that Jesus was the Messiah or the Son of God, though many believed He was a Prophet.”

“Behold the Man”

Al Bloom was listening with head thrust forward, as the priest continued his explanations.

“Now, Rabbi, I’m sure we three can understand that when finally these befuddled witnesses of the Trial saw before them on the Judge’s Platform a bleeding, torn, disfigured Jesus, they became an easy prey to mob fury and joined the Deniers in yelling, ‘Crucify Him.’ These Deniers were insincere men who had through base motives deliberately shut their eyes to the personal holiness and miracles of Jesus. They had plotted His death; they had arrested Him; and now they were in a frenzy to have Him finished off.”

The Rabbi stroked his chin thoughtfully as he said: “I’m not sure, Father, that I see eye to eye with you about the insincerity of those Leaders; can you justify your stand?”

“I believe I can, Rabbi, and to your satisfaction; but I’m afraid it would keep us too long now. In my pamphlet ‘Jews and You’ I have gone into that phase rather thoroughly; would you care to take a copy?” said the Priest, pointing to one on the desk.

“Thanks,” said Rabbi Leidner, glancing through it casually; “I’ll read it tonight.”

How Many Jews Wanted His Death?

“Well, to get back to the Trial—the circumstances just brought to light make us ask: ‘How many of the Jews at the Trial of Jesus meant what they were saying if and when they cried out: “His Blood be upon us and upon our Children”? How many of them realized what they were doing when under the influence of mob psychology they clamored: ‘Crucify him!’ To that degree their guilt lessens.

“Moreover, Rabbi—and this is important—how could the mass of the Jewish People be sure Jesus was a blasphemer, when even the Heads of the Nation were contradicting one another about it?”

“Your thesis seems plausible enough, Father McClaren, aside from certain things I must still ascertain about the sincerity or insincerity of those Leaders,” commented the Rabbi.

“I’m glad you see it that way, Rabbi; it’s urgent that both Jews and Christians get a clear understanding of what happened,—since such understanding will do much to prevent and banish ill-feeling, prejudice, and the spirit of persecution.

Did the Jews Know

“Every Christian, every Jew and non-Jew should know that the arrest of Jesus was plotted and carried out with the utmost secrecy, for fear of the people. It should be stressed that personal responsibility for the arrest and conviction of Jesus rests mainly

Important!

on the souls of corrupt men who used their positions as Spiritual Leaders to hide their wickedness from their people. HAD THE JEWS IN GENERAL KNOWN OF THAT PLOT TO ARREST JESUS THEY WOULD HAVE RESISTED IT BY FORCE.

“Of the deceived but well-intentioned Jewish witnesses of the Crucifixion it is written that they returned from Calvary striking their hearts in sorrow for their share in the deed: but, whatever share they had in it was pardoned even before they recognized it. The gentle voice of Jesus was heard from his place on the Cross: ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ It was to those Jews, and to the excellent minority of Pharisees and Sadducees among them that St. Peter was able to say after Jesus rose from the dead: ‘I know that you did it in ignorance as did also your Rulers.’

**Via Dolorosa
in Reverse**

Bernie Edelberg

“Now Rabbi it seems to me that with much stronger reason we can say something like that about the Jews among us today. Perhaps you have read the anecdote about little Bernie Edelberg and his playmates. Bernie was playing with some of his christian playmates one day after school when they began to tell him the story of the Crucifixion which they had just learned. They ended by assuring him that “the Jews” had killed Christ. Bernie answered after a moment of silence: ‘That may be so, but I want you to know that the Edelbergs had nothing to do with it!’

"As the radio has it, Father,—'you can say that again,'" said Al Bloom earnestly, provoking a smile from the Priest and the Rabbi.

"It's true;" Father McClaren continued: "neither the Edelbergs, Goldsteins, Cohens, Levinskys, Blooms, Leidners, nor any other Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus **unless they fully intend to be responsible for it.** IF THE JEWS OF THAT DAY WERE IN DOUBT HOW CAN WE EXPECT THE JEWS OF TODAY TO BE SURE ABOUT IT ALL.

"He Would Be Crucified Again" "Really, what spirit was it that killed Jesus of Nazareth? Anton Lang, the Christus of Oberammergau, answered this well when asked by reporters: 'What if Christ came back today?'"

"'He would be crucified again,'" he answered at once. And he did not mean that the **Jews** would do it again: he meant that the human wickedness which did it the first time would repeat it, because human nature does not change. Hypocrisy, greed, worldliness, craving for power, and for personal glory—all these are with us today. Like the poor,—those miserable weaknesses will be 'with us always'."

"That's a thought, Father, which Al and I can appreciate."

World's Two Big Mistakes "I'm glad of it, Rabbi; time's getting on" said the Priest glancing at the clock, "let me bring my thoughts on this matter to a close; they will represent the pure Christian view on what we call the Mystery of Love.

Two Big Mistakes

“In the Providence of God the two greatest mistakes of the human race have become its greatest blessings — namely the disobedience of Adam, and the crucifixion of Jesus. The sin of Adam was in a way the cause of the Crucifixion, because it left the human race open to the further sins that brought on the Crucifixion. At the same time, the sin of Adam called forth the Mercy of God which came in the promise of a Redeemer (Messiah—Christ); a Redeemer who was to restore to the human race its original inheritance—intimate friendship with God, and a hope of eternal life. That Redeemer came; and by his death on the Cross, made atonement by His Blood for the sins of all men: for, ‘Without Blood there is no redemption.’

“To the sinful action of Adam,
God joined His Promise of
mercy—a Redeemer to come;

“To the sinful action of the Jewish Leaders, Jesus joined His
own merciful will to die as the
Lamb of God for all men without
distinction of race—for the
Jews and for all peoples.

“Those are the thoughts of the great Jew St. Paul, Apostle of Jesus; ‘The Messiah died for all . . . that they may live unto him who died for them and rose again.’ And in regard to the Jewish People, we have no plainer words than those written by St. John ‘(Caiaphas) . . . the High-Priest of that year prophesied that Jesus was to die for the (Jewish) Nation.’

No Evil in God

“God did not of course will the **sins** of Adam, and the Jewish Leaders, but He certainly did will the good effects of those sins. God, in all His dealings with men always draws good from evil. The evil that was the unjust condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus became the **GOOD** of all men. The Cross which bore the Master of life and death is now set on high beckoning to all nations to flock to the Mountain of the Lord and to adore. ‘How incomprehensible are His Judgments, how unsearchable His Ways...the offense of the Jews was the riches of the world....’

O Blessed Sin of the Jews “Mysterious but wonderful is the Holy Spirit breathing through the lungs of the Church on the eve of the Feast of the Resurrection: ‘O Blessed sin of Adam that merited such a Redeemer!’ We must observe that though the sin of Adam merited the Redeemer, the Redeemer did not redeem us except by the being nailed to a cross. Could we not then sing in the same exultant voice, ‘O Blessed sin of those Jewish Leaders which occasioned the salvation of the nations.’?”

The Rabbi rose, and Al Bloom with him: “Father, said Rabbi Leidner, “Let me be a friend of yours. I know what you are trying to do for all of us. **May Our Father in heaven make us children of one family; and let us hope that ‘the thunder and lightning of Mt. Sinai will some day become one with the fire of love on the Cross of Calvary’.**”

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10c the copy
50 for \$4.00 100 for \$7.00

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St. Joseph's Rectory, 145 S. Millwood Ave.

Wichita 12, Kansas

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